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Tennessee's Statewide Assessment Based on Modified Academic Achievement Standards - TCAP-MAAS

Parent and School Initial Guidance

In April, 2007 the U.S. Department of Education announced an option for states to develop and administer an alternate statewide assessment based on Modified Academic Achievement Standards (MAAS) for students with disabilities. This assessment's purpose is to provide a more appropriate means of measuring the skills of a student whose disability interferes with performance on large-scale assessments. Tennessee has been awarded a General Supervision Enhancement Grant (GSEG) for an initiative that includes development of a modified academic achievement assessment, support and training for LEA implementation of the TCAP-MAAS and standards-based IEPs, data analysis, and ongoing program improvement activity. In Tennessee, the MAAS assessment for students with disabilities in grades 3 through 8 is intended to evaluate individual learning needs and yield results that more accurately reflect students' academic progress while also guiding instruction based on individual students' needs. Students' scores of Proficient or Advanced on the TCAP-MAAS may be included in AYP calculations, subject to a cap of 2% of all students assessed at the state and district levels.

What is a modified academic achievement standard?

A modified academic achievement standard is an expectation of performance that is challenging for eligible students, but is less difficult than a grade-level academic achievement standard and more demanding than alternate academic achievement standards. The level of performance to meet the academic achievement standard modifies expectations for mastery – not grade-level standards. Academic achievement standards are modified, not the content standards. A modified academic achievement standard is aligned with the state's content standards and describes the level of achievement which has been modified from the original academic achievement standard.

Who is eligible to take the TCAP- MAAS?

1. Students with a disability who are on an active IEP are eligible to take the MAAS.
2. Eligible students may have a disability in any of the Federal disability categories. **Note: The category Functionally Delayed is a State category, but a student CANNOT be excluded from participation in this assessment based on category of disability.** A student whose disability is classified as Functionally Delayed is eligible to participate in this assessment if determined eligible by the IEP team, but any proficient scores cannot be counted toward AYP. A student classified as Functionally Delayed taking the test would not count toward the 2% cap.
3. It is the decision of the IEP team whether or not a student with a disability should be assessed with the MAAS.

What must the IEP Team consider in determining whether or not a student should take the MAAS?

1. There should be evidence that the student's disability currently prevents reaching grade level proficiency. This means that the IEP team must look at data from multiple, valid measures of the student's progress over time which includes objective evidence of the effect of the disability on grade-level proficiency, progress to date in response to appropriate instruction, and progress toward meeting the annual goals based on grade-level academic standards.
2. The IEP team must be reasonably certain that while the student may make significant progress, despite receiving appropriate instruction specifically designed to address the student's individual needs, including special education and related services, he/she is not likely to achieve *grade level* proficiency in the year covered by the IEP.
3. The IEP team should consider whether or not the student may participate in the standard assessment with appropriate accommodations, and that these options have been exhausted.

What is required to ensure the student's IEP is appropriate and supports participation in the TCAP-MAAS?

1. The IEP must document annual goals that address the skills specified in the content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled. These are also known as standards-based IEPs, in which the IEP goals are aligned to the state content standards.
2. The IEP reflects curriculum and daily instruction that focuses on standards-based goals in the content area(s) in which the MAAS will be taken.
3. The IEP must reflect access to grade level curriculum.
4. The IEP reflects how the student's progress in achieving standards-based goals is to be documented and monitored.
5. Participation in the TCAP-MAAS must be an IEP team decision. Since parents are part of the team, they must be part of the decision making process. Additionally, they must be fully informed that their child's progress will be measured based on modified academic achievement standards.
6. Students who take the TCAP-MAAS are not precluded from attempting to complete the requirements for a regular high school diploma.

For more information, contact your school, your district special education office, your regional resource center, your field service center, or the Division of Special Education.